



Maine IS Technology Newsletter : A Brief History

(Published 1999)

I began my tenure at BIS in the early 1980's and was known as "Protocol". Back in those days, BIS was known as Central Computer Services. Computers and technology were relatively new in state government. I focused on issues of importance to our mainframe customers, primarily on policies and procedures, but later added a section to introduce new bureau employees, a forerunner to the current biography. I featured sections from CCS administration, system software, information and resource center, and training. I was published by the OIS Communications Committee.

By August 1988, I changed my name to the "OIS/BDP Newsletter. I decided to try a new look and began to use columns and graphics, although I was still printed within the bureau. I also gave the biography a separate section, and the biographies were more substantial. I also added an employee transition section, which is still included in the newsletter today. By October 1988, I dropped BDP from my name and became the "OIS Newsletter".

The Communication Committee published the "OIS Newsletter" for several years, chaired by Cathy Wills and in beginning in April 1989, Nancy Merrick. I continued to focus on informing the customer of activities at the bureau, however I was beginning to evolve. In February 1989, I included my first photograph (moving out the DPS 88) and then began using a standard masthead. In April 1989, I included a photo with the biography, a practice still in place today.

As part of my metamorphosis, I began using graphic images and headlines during 1989. I also added quotes. In June 1989 I ran the first contest, pizzas were given as prizes to readers who found their names hidden in the newsletter. I continued to include the puzzles each month and eventually added the challenge we see today. In addition, a table of contents was included on my front page. During this time an editorial board and editor were identified.

During the late 1980's I was sent out to be printed professionally, with the number of pages fluctuating between 4 and 8 each month. I changed my name to the "BIS Newsletter" in February 1992, reflecting the change in the name of the bureau. My logo and masthead remained the same as it had been since December 1989. This logo was used until January 1998 when my name changed for the final time.

John Hastings took the helm as my editor in May 1993. I began to feature statewide technology endeavors rather than those that affected only BIS. I added monthly columns on security, DB2, training, and included a calendar of events.

In February 1995, Tova Starbird-DeVos became my editor. I was now consistently 8 pages each month. I still featured the monthly columns, with additional monthly columns such as the DBA corner, and the computer corner. I continued to focus on articles about BIS services to customers. Articles from various agencies were increasing. Bob Witham became my editor in May 1996. The editorial board now included two members outside of BIS.

Marion Bowman and Janey Barton were my co-editors from December 1996 to August 1998. During this time, many changes were made. I featured original artwork by Bruce Laplante for the first time in December 1996, which continues to be a highlight of every issue. The editorial board membership increased to include 5 non-BIS members. I was much more outwardly focused than in the past.

In mid 1997, I branched out to the Internet. The online version has seen increased traffic during the past several months and national organizations are pulling information from my Internet sibling. In January 1998 I changed my name again, to "Maine IS Technology Newsletter" to more accurately represented my statewide focus. I also sported a new look that highlights my new focus. I also made changes to the biography. Biographies now feature employees from any state agency that are working with technology. Generally, the biography relates to a feature article.

In August 1998, Mary Cloutier became my editor. I continued to focus on technology in state government and increased the number of articles written by employees of various agencies. I added multiple colors in December 1998 (black, green, and red).

What are my goals for the future? I hope to be a well-rounded publication that serves the technology community of Maine State Government. Let me know if I am doing a good job by taking our reader survey.